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TEMPLE OF SET



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## General Information and Admissions Policies

- Revised 2/XXII AES -

Thank you for your inquiry. The Temple of Set is an institution unlike any you have previously encountered. Before you can make an informed decision concerning possible affiliation, it is necessary for you to consider the history of the Temple, its basic tenets, its current design and programs, and the benefits and obligations incurred by each Setian.

### History of the Temple

While the Temple of Set as an organization was formally incorporated in 1975 CE, its magical and philosophical roots are prehistoric, originating in mankind's first apprehension that there is "something different" about the human race - a sense of self-consciousness that places humanity apart from and above all other known forms of life.

Ancient religions - of which those of Egypt are generally acknowledged the eldest - either exalted or feared this self-consciousness. Those which exalted it took the position that the human psyche is capable of opposition to and domination of the forces of nature. Those fearing it warned man that such a presumption of independence would be sinful and dangerous. Therefore, they said, such "will to power" should be concealed, sublimated - and if necessary punished and exterminated - that mankind might return to an Eden-like "state of nature" untroubled by the burdens of having to take responsibility for decisions, judgments, and actions based upon an essentially personal determination of "good" and "evil".

The psyche-worshipping religions were more intellectually demanding than their nature-worshipping counterparts, since it is more difficult to reason a path through one's span of conscious existence than it is to be swept along by a current of semi-rational stimulus and response. The reasoning religions - or schools of initiatory philosophy - attained levels of abstract knowledge that made them mysterious to the masses. In a few societies, such as Egypt and Greece, such groups were respected and admired. More often, however, their exclusive elitism and "supernatural" activities made them objects of resentment and persecution.

While all philosophical schools embraced the psychecentric consciousness to some degree, there were a very few that made it avowedly and explicitly the focus of their attention. The divine personifications ("gods") of such schools have come down to us as symbols of what worshippers of non-consciousness consider the supreme "evil": the Prince of Darkness in his many forms. Of these the most ancient is Set, whose Priesthood can be traced to predynastic times. Images of Set have been dated to ca. 3200 BCE, with astronomically-based estimates of inscriptions dating to ca. 5000 BCE.

notoriety. His organizations survived his 1947 death only in highly-fragmented and doctrinarily degenerate factions.

In 1966 a San Francisco sorcerer named Anton Szandor LaVey founded the Church of Satan as a medium for the study of the Black Arts and as an ethical statement repudiating the religious hypocrisy of conventional society. The Church remained principally a San Francisco phenomenon for its first four years, then during 1970-1974 branched out across the United States and Canada with local "Grottos" headed by those ordained to the Satanic Priesthood (the Priesthood of Mendes).

The Church of Satan's attitude towards magic was more pragmatic and utilitarian than that of such mystically-based organizations as the G.'.D.'. and A.'.A.'. It saw no need for exhaustive studies into the often incoherent and inconsistent concepts of the Cabala, nor did it see anything extraordinarily significant in sex-magic. Rather it chose to approach the occult arts and sciences more rationally and even scientifically, employing "Occam's razor" to design and conduct Workings of ritual magic that were simple and direct, yet effective. In this the Church was generally successful, but it continued to experience increasing difficulty with the basic nihilism and negative connotations of its religious imagery. It could not escape the self-assumed limitation of being "anti-Christian", and of course the parameters of philosophy and metaphysics have been extended far beyond the primitive and superstitious conceptual and symbolic limits of the Judaic/Christian tradition.

It also proved to be a misfortune of modern Satanism that, en route to divinity, the psyche is prone to superficial egotism. The Church suffered periodically from petty crises and scandals among the general membership, and finally Anton LaVey lost confidence in its organizational viability. In 1975 he made a decision to redesign it as a non-functional, insincere showcase for his personal glamorization and financial income. This decision was emphatically rejected by the majority of the Priesthood, who immediately resigned from the Church in protest and denied its legitimacy as a true Church of Satan henceforth. The senior Initiate, Michael A. Aquino, invoked the Prince of Darkness in quest of a new Mandate to preserve and enhance the more noble concepts which the Church of Satan had conceived and outlined. That Mandate was given in the form of *The Book of Coming Forth by Night* - a statement by that entity, in his most ancient semblance as Set, ordaining the Temple of Set to succeed the Church.

The Temple was incorporated in California as a non-profit church in 1975, receiving both state and federal recognition and tax-exemption later that same year. It has since remained the sole Satanic religious institution possessing these legal credentials.

## The Setian Philosophy

"Since movements dedicated to the Prince of Darkness have been so ill-tolerated by the masses of humanity wherever and whenever they have appeared, why have they survived at all? Why do they continue to exercise such uncanny attraction, and why now should you consider approaching this particular one?"

The appeal of occultism is much the same as that of conventional religion: Logical positivism and scientific materialism, though they have made great strides



towards explaining the "how" of existence, have failed entirely to explain the "why". Hence the curious seek answers in metaphysical philosophy or religion. Metaphysical philosophy requires a logical base from which various suprarational principles are induced. Conventional religion is the simplification of such a philosophy into a crude ideology, which adherents need not understand, but only accept as an act of blind faith.

Conventional religions, with their colorful mythologies analyzed in terms of the underlying philosophical principles, represent simply the primitive longing of mankind to feel "at one" with the Universal harmony he perceives about him. "White" magic, as practiced by primitive pagan and modern institutional religions, offers devotees the illusion of "re-inclusion" in the Universal scheme of things through various ritualistic devotions and superstitions.

The Black Magician, on the other hand, rejects both the desirability of union with the Universe and any self-deceptive antics designed to create such an illusion. He has considered the existence of the individual psyche - the "real you" of your conscious intelligence - and has taken satisfaction from its existence as something unlike anything else in the Universe. The Black Magician desires this psyche to live, to experience, and to continue. He does not wish to die - or to lose his consciousness and identity in a larger, Universal consciousness [assuming that such a Universal consciousness exists]. He wants to be. This decision in favor of individual existence is the first premise of the Temple of Set.

The second premise of the Temple is that the psychecentric consciousness can evolve towards its own divinity through deliberate exercise of the intelligence and Will, a process of becoming or coming into being whose roots may be found in the dialectic method expounded by Plato and the conscious exaltation of the Will proposed by Nietzsche.

Ironically it is the very ease with which any individual can apprehend and appreciate his or her personal psyche that has frightened the many religions of the world which deny and oppose the power of that psyche. Clothed though they may be in riches, ritual, and respectability, they always have been and remain obsessed with the suppressed knowledge of their own essential insubstantiality. They endeavor to distract attention from this by sponsoring shows of mind-numbing drugs, mantras, masses, privations, entertainments, and penances to coax or cow their flocks of adherents into a confused, apprehensive, but trusting state of faith and automatic obedience. They shudder with horror at the psyche; they paint it red and add horns, cloven hooves, and a forked tail to dramatize how "dangerous" it is. Yet they can never escape it or defeat it, because they have never really succeeded in opposing themselves to it - merely in distorting and perverting it. How could they destroy something which, in the final analysis, is the conscious self of every human being?

The "worship" of Set is thus the "worship" of individualism. In the Church of Satan this was taken to mean indulgence in all [legal] desires of the body and ego. Since many such desires are impulsive and destructive, the Church found itself in the awkward position of *de facto* endorsing many practices which were degrading rather than exalting, and which simply accelerated the tensions resulting in the eventual crisis of 1975. The Temple of Set determined to preserve the principle of individualism, but to add to it the "higher self" aspirations of Aleister Crowley's pre-O.T.O. philosophy of *Thelema*. Glorification of the ego is not enough; it is the complete psyche - the entire self or soul - which must be recognized, appreciated,

and actualized. The process by which this exaltation of the psyche is sought is called by the name *Xeper* [pronounced "Kheffer"; it is the Egyptian hieroglyphic term for "to become" or "to come into being"].

The means by which Setians seek to *Xeper* are many. As a matter of principle the Temple declines to standardize its approach to Initiates. Each may pursue topics of greatest personal interest with whatever emphasis and at whatever rate desired. The Temple seeks merely to be a forum for Setians to communicate and cooperate with one another constructively and courteously. Many ideas and philosophies are discussed within it, but such discussion does not constitute the dictation of dogma. Indeed dogma - to include fixed ideology in any form - is repugnant to the Temple. We strive rather towards an atmosphere of "best possible premises", which are always subject to constructive, intelligent examination and criticism. That same atmosphere is Socratic, however, in that foolish, pretentious, or destructive egotism under the guise of exploration is neither respected nor endured.

While it is obvious that Setians have more than enough interests to occupy an organization with many times our membership and resources on a full-time basis, the Temple of Set is not intended to consume the energies or lifestyles of its Initiates. Since a truly Adept magician must interact constructively and comfortably with conventional society, encouragement of monastic isolation within Temple circles would be counterproductive to personal development and even constrictive of the flexibility necessary to the entire Temple. Setians are accordingly advised to pursue as wide a variety of secular interests as possible, and to let Setian philosophy apply to them only as reasonably appropriate.

## Structure and Operation

The deliberately individualistic atmosphere of the Temple of Set is not easily conducive to group activities on a routine or programmed basis. There are no congregations of docile "followers" - only cooperative philosophers and magicians.

Supreme authority in the Temple is held by the Council of Nine, which appoints both the High Priest of Set and the Executive Director. Initiates are Recognized according to six degrees, based upon Western magical tradition and incorporating features from many Black Magical societies: Setian I°, Adept II°, Priest or Priestess of Set III°, Master of the Temple IV°, Magus V°, and Ipsissimus VI°. Recognition as an Adept constitutes certification by the Temple that one has in fact mastered and successfully applied the essential principles of Black Magic. The Priesthood and higher degrees are conferred by Set alone, and Recognized by the Temple according to his Will.

The design, care, and operation of the Temple are entrusted by Set to the Priesthood. All Initiates of the Priesthood are originally highly qualified Adepts in the Black Arts. Most of your contact with them will be in this context. Because they are responsible for the integrity of the Temple as a whole, however, they have the authority both to evaluate and Recognize Initiates' competence and, if necessary, to suspend or expel individuals who have proven themselves incapable of maintaining Setian standards of dignity and excellence. The Priesthood takes all of these responsibilities extremely seriously, since it regards its name literally and its trust as sacred. In this respect it stands significantly apart from conventional



religious clergy, who *de facto* consider their "priesthoods" as social professions and their deities as mere symbols and metaphors for their institutional or personal moral ideologies.

The knowledge of the Temple of Set is made available through four principal avenues: an extensive, annually-updated reading list of published works in over twenty specialized fields; the newsletter *Scroll of Set*, the newsletter *Runes* of the Temple's Order of the Trapezoid; and the series of loose-leaf encyclopædias entitled the *Jeweled Tablets of Set*. The contents of the *Scroll* and *Runes* are time-dated, of course, but the contents of the *Tablets* change periodically as ideas are advanced, improved, or disproved; or as they become more or less relevant to the Temple's areas of concern. The *Scroll*, *Runes*, and *Tablets* are reproduced simply and inexpensively [similar to this letter] to preclude excessive membership expenditure for frequently-revised publications.

In the old Church of Satan and in the present-day Temple of Set, most Initiates have been geographically distant from one another. This has necessitated organizational services geared more towards the individual than to local groups [though the Temple has provision for "Pylons" just as the old Church did for "Grottos"]. It has also meant that Setians supervise the Temple and interact with one another largely by correspondence. If you affiliate with the Temple, you should anticipate this aspect of its design. [Official Temple mailings to overseas Setians are all sent via Air Mail.]

Setians tend to form friendships and to meet with one another on an individual or group basis [the larger gatherings are called "Conclaves"], but there is no requirement for either group activity or regularly-scheduled "devotions" of any sort. Affiliation is kept confidential; your admission is known only to the Priesthood unless you desire to meet other Setians. In summary, you may apply the services and systems of the Temple as you wish, and as you deem most complementary to your *Xeper*; otherwise they will not intrude upon you.

## An Important Clarification

As noted above, much of the vicious propaganda concerning medieval Satanism became self-fulfilling prophecy as ignorant would-be witches and sorcerers superstitiously experimented with cannibalism, drugs, grave-robbing, church desecration, and sexual violence. Regretfully there still exist some individuals whose idea of "Satanism" is largely a simple-minded synthesis of Christian propaganda and Hollywood horror movies. The Temple of Set enjoys the colorful legacy of the Black Arts, and we use many forms of historical Satanic imagery for our stimulation and pleasure. But we have not found that any interest or activity which an enlightened, mature intellect would regard as undignified, sadistic, criminal, or depraved is desirable, much less essential to our work.

The Temple of Set is an evolutionary product of human experience. Such experience includes the magical and philosophical work of many occult organizations and orders which have preceded us. Some of these groups were socially acceptable by contemporary or modern standards; others were not. Some individuals or groups made brilliant discoveries in one field of interest while blighting their reputations with shocking excesses in others. In examining the secret and suppressed corners of history for valuable and useful material, the

Temple must be at pains to insist upon its ethical presentation and use of such discoveries as it makes. Setians who are in any doubt as to the ethics involved in any of the fields which we explore should seek counsel from the Priesthood. All Setians are further expected to display a high measure of common sense in this area.

The Black Arts are dangerous in the same way that working with volatile chemicals is dangerous. This is most emphatically not a field for unstable, immature, or otherwise emotionally or intellectually weak-minded people. Such are a hazard to themselves and to others with whom they come into contact. The Temple endeavors to not admit them to begin with. If such an individual should gain admittance and later be exposed, he will be summarily expelled. In cases of doubt the Temple may be expected to place the burden of proof on the individual, for the sake of all Setians and the Temple's integrity.

The Temple of Set evaluates conventional religions as erroneous in principle and therefore unworthy of peer status. We feel no need to concern ourselves with their activities, or for that matter to maintain any sort of "diplomatic relations" with them [as in councils of churches]. Our position is that they may serve a useful social function as purveyors of soothing myths and fantasies to humans unable to attain Setian levels of self-consciousness. Hence we ignore conventional religious/occult organizations unless they intrude upon our affairs.

These warnings are not intended to be oppressive or intimidating, but they should be taken seriously. The Temple is a forum for the investigation of many subjects which conventional society finds odd, mysterious, and even extremely frightening. The Temple will be tolerated only to the extent that it is known to be pursuing its interests carefully, expertly, and responsibly. It occupies a delicate position in a world which is largely unhappy with itself, and which is ceaselessly searching for scapegoats. Hence the Temple must take care to maintain its social balance with prudence and dignity.

## Affiliation

In the Church of Satan we learned that there were many people who wished to "visit", to "study", and to "observe" without the least intention of a personal commitment. For many years the Church endeavored to accommodate such dilettantes on the assumption that, upon exposure to the philosophy, they would appreciate its essential requirement for such a commitment. We were wrong. Once being in the position to enjoy the "accessories" of the philosophy without having to confront its core principle, they continued to vampirize the Church indefinitely. They contributed as little as they could, took as much as they could, and ultimately constituted the single most destructive influence leading to the Church's corruption in 1975.

The Temple of Set has determined that it will not make the same mistake. Its activities, publications, knowledge, and services are reserved for those who affiliate with it, or on an individual-case basis, for non-Setians who request assistance from the Temple that we deem to be in our interests or in the interests of the community as a whole. The First Degree (I°) of Temple affiliation is regarded as a "status of mutual evaluation" wherein the Initiate and the Temple can assess one another's merit from the standpoint of minimum investment and involvement. If a I° Initiate should decide that the Temple is not, after all, appropriate to his wants or needs, he

is welcome to depart with our good wishes for his satisfaction elsewhere.

Should you have questions which are reasonably pertinent to your serious consideration whether or not to apply for admission to the Temple, you are welcome to address them to the Executive Director of the Temple. If you wish to apply for admission as a Setian I°, there are two avenues of approach available to you:

(1) If you are already in contact with a Priest or Priestess of Set, you may request him or her to sponsor your application. In that case you may send a letter to the Executive Director mentioning this sponsorship. With your letter enclose a check or money order for U.S.\$50 (U.S.\$60 for overseas applicants), payable to *Temple of Set*. If Priesthood sponsorship is verified, approval of your application will be automatic.

(2) If you are not known to a member of the Priesthood, write a letter to the Executive Director introducing yourself, summarizing whatever aspects of your background you feel to be relevant, and stating your reasons for deciding to seek entrance into the Temple. Enclose the admission fee. The Temple will make a decision and respond to you accordingly. If necessary you will be asked for additional information. Should your application not be approved for any reason, the fee will be refunded. Persons applying for admission via this procedure should be as objective and candid as possible in their self-assessment. There is no point in misleading the Temple concerning one's suitability for admission, which will only result sooner or later in the truth coming to light - with the consequent waste of both the individual's and the Temple's time. If there are crucial areas of possible incompatibility, it is incumbent on the applicant to identify them before affiliation so that they may be addressed and, if possible, resolved.

Annual renewal fee for all Initiates is U.S.\$25 (U.S.\$30 overseas). There are no other regular or recurring fees. Publications of the Temple and events scheduled by the Temple are generally made available on a non-profit basis to Initiates who are interested.

The only physical requirement for admission is that the aspirant be at least 18 years of age. Those below the age of 18 may not visit Temple functions, whether or not they are relatives of Initiates. The Temple has no programs for children.

If your application is approved, you will receive notification from the Executive Director's office, together with membership identification, certificate, copy of the *Crystal Tablet of Set* [including the current reading list & intercommunication roster], copy of *The Book of Coming Forth by Night: Analysis & Commentary* [including other key magical documents pertinent to the Æon and Temple of Set], most recent issues of the *Scroll of Set* and *Runes*, and Setian I° pendant medallion.

Then it is all up to you. The Temple of Set is designed to assist you in the ways we have found to be the most practical, productive, and factually accurate. But, as helpful as the Temple may be, and as proud of it as we are, it is nevertheless properly understood as a tool. You are the one who must put that tool to use in a way that will enable you to *Xeper*.

Such is the Word of the Æon of Set.



It would be naive of me not to suppose that my religious office in the Temple of Set was of concern to you when making your assessment of the situation. After all, the Temple is an avowedly Satanist institution, and Satanists are popularly assumed to be bad people. The irony of all this is that the Temple of Set has worked very hard since its founding in 1975 to be a decent, constructive, and responsible organization. Where minors are concerned, we do not admit them as members, nor allow them to be present at our activities - not because there is anything perverse about those activities, but rather because we do not feel that children should be indoctrinated into any religion before they have reached discerning adulthood.

The Temple of Set is thus very proud of the standards it has maintained and the reputation it has established among those who have taken the time to study it in detail. We have never had a single problem with law-enforcement authorities in all of the twelve years of our existence, and it is all the more disturbing to see this record upset by such an unjustified accusation as the one in this case.

I have consulted my attorneys for advice in this surprising and bewildering situation. I presume you would do the same if someone came "out of the middle of nowhere" and did something like this to you and your family. Nevertheless I have always regarded the F.B.I. as a national institution to be admired and respected. The same holds true for [redacted]

[redacted] - and who this last year was finally able to tour the F.B.I. headquarters at the Department of Justice.

We would very much like to feel that way again, and your assurance that this unfortunate incident has been corrected in your official records and reports would make our further concern unnecessary.

Sincerely,

[redacted signature box]

Lieutenant Colonel  
U.S. Army

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